

CLAIMS

1. A method of provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points, wherein a facilitator provisions the circuit for a customer, the method comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a customer request for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;

evaluating a plurality of network parameters relating to said customer request;

10 linking a plurality of network segments provided by a plurality of separate transport suppliers, wherein said plurality of network segments is linked via at least one facilitator-controlled exchange facility to form a provisioned circuit between said at least two terminal points; and

providing access to the provisioned circuit to said customer.

15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein:

said step of evaluating a plurality of network parameters further comprises consulting a database of information relating to available network segments from separate transport suppliers.

20 3. The method of claim 2, wherein:

the database is updated to reflect the information relating to available network segments on a real-time basis.

25 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

providing a plurality of network parameter options to the customer before the step of linking said plurality of network segments to form the provisioned circuit.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

identifying at least one customized circuit option; and
providing said at least one customized circuit option to the

customer before the step of linking said plurality of network segments to form the provisioned circuit.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein:
the step of identifying at least one customized circuit option further comprises the step of filtering a plurality of available circuit options with respect to at least one network parameter provided by the customer.

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7. The method of claim 1, wherein:
the customer request is received into an automated ordering and provisioning system.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein:
the customer accesses the ordering and provisioning system via the Internet.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein:
the segments are linked using an automated ordering and provisioning system.

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10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
serving as a party of record with respect to a plurality of service agreements associated with said plurality of network segments, said plurality of service agreements being provided by said plurality of separate transport suppliers.

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11. The method of claim 10, wherein:
said customer remains anonymous with respect to said plurality of separate transport suppliers throughout said method steps.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
providing a single point of contact for said customer in connection with billing and circuit maintenance procedures from said transport suppliers relating to said network segments.

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13. A method of obtaining a provisioned circuit between at least two terminal points, the method comprising the steps of:
 providing a request to a facilitator for a circuit between said at least two terminal points;
5 receiving at least one circuit option from said facilitator in response to said request, wherein each of said at least one circuit options comprises a plurality of network segments from separate transport suppliers, said plurality of network segments being linked via at least one facilitator-controlled exchange facility; and
10 selecting one of said at least one circuit options for provisioning into a provisioned circuit; and
 receiving access to said provisioned circuit.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of:
 providing the facilitator with at least one preferred network parameter, said at least one circuit option being chosen by said facilitator in accordance with said parameter.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein:
 the step of requesting the provisioned circuit is performed via an automated ordering and provisioning system.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein:
 the automated ordering and provisioning system is accessed via the Internet.

25. The method of claim 14 wherein said facilitator further comprises a software program running on a server.

18. The method of claim 14 wherein said facilitator further comprises at least one human operator.

19. A system for provisioning a circuit between at least two terminal points, said system comprising:

at least one processing server in connection with a plurality of customers;

5 a database resident on said at least one processing server, wherein the database is updated on a regular basis with information related to a plurality of network segments of a plurality of transport suppliers, and wherein said information is received from said plurality of transport suppliers;

10 a plurality of exchange facilities in communication with said at least one server for facilitating the linking of the network segments; and logic software resident on said at least one server and in communication with the database and the facilities to automate the linking of said network segments via said exchange facilities to form a provisioned circuit in accordance with a customer request.

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20. The system of claim 19 further comprising at least one facilitator for receiving said customer request and interfacing with said logic software.

21. The system of claim 20 further comprising means for evaluating said database information and means for providing a plurality of circuit options in accordance with said customer request.

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